THE

HONOUR OF MARRIAGE

OPPOSED TO

ALL IMPURITIES:

AN

ESSAY.

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ESSAY.

By the late Mr. SANDEMAN,
Author of Letters on Theron *and* Aſpaſio.

Marriage is honourable in all, and the Bed undefiled: but Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge. Heb. xiii. 4.

Wherewith ſhall a young Man cleanſe his Way? by taking Heed thereto, according to thy Word. Pſal. cxix. 9.

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INTRODUCTION.

EVERY reader of the enſuing pages, who pays any degree of attention to the ſentiments contained in them, and is tolerably acquainted with the ſubject in general, will be ready to acknowledge, that it is treated in a manner quite new, if not very ſtriking.

This acknowledgement would have been ſtill more readily excited, had the author himſelf lived to correct the Eſſay, and complete it for the preſs.

But, however new and ſtriking the manner in which the ſubject is treated, it cannot be expected, that this Eſſay ſhould gain any thing like a general

approbation, becauſe it does moſt ſtrongly condemn, the too-prevailing courſe of this world, with reſpect to marriage: and this is ſufficient to expoſe it to general diſregard, if not univerſal contempt.

Indeed, the dictates of nature, and the voice of conſcience, muſt be on the ſide of the decent and honourable practice here recommended: but falſe motives of intereſt, oft times baniſh the principles of affection and honour, which, if cheriſhed, attend the dictates of nature, and, leaving only the unruly impetus behind, hurry the young man into that deep ditch, the mercenary embraces of the diſeaſed harlot, and bring on the ruin both of his conſtitution and fortune; and thus, too late, he is convinced, that the motives which his parents taught him, and which led him

him to poſtpone honourable marriage, are, even in point of prudence, deluſive and vain.

If any are led to reject, with proper indignation, thoſe baſe motives by which marriage is ſo generally poſtponed, becauſe they would keep good conſciences, by avoiding every impurity condemned in God's word, it muſt be through the influence of that word, which comes wholly from God: and it was for the encouragement of ſuch, that this Eſſay was at firſt written.

If they attend to the ſubject, and are incited to cleanſe their way, by taking heed thereto according to God's word, though all others, as the natural effect of having their own deeds reproved, ſhould pour contempt upon this Eſſay, and ſtill cleave to their own contaminated

nated way, yet the great end and design of the author in writing, and of the editor in publishing this little piece, will be effectually answered.

THE

THE HONOUR OF MARRIAGE OPPOSED TO ALL IMPURITIES.

THE dignity of man above the brute creation appears in a ſtriking point of view, from the minute attention of the Deity to all the concerns of humanity; and from the care which he hath taken, to ſupport and honour the genuine claims, relations, and propenſities of nature, his own workmanſhip, in oppoſition to every irregular deſire, ariſing from the corruption of nature, which with great propriety, and conſiſtency, he hath ſtamped as diſhonourable, and accompanied with a ſenſe, yea, very often, with viſible effects of his diſpleaſure.

The conſcience, or common ſenſe of mankind, notwithſtanding all their depravity, ſupports this general obſervation; we count

nothing diſhonourable, baſe, or ridiculous, that properly belongs to nature. Attempts to ridicule nature, may indeed prove ſucceſsful, in various inſtances, to promote the mirth of fools; but they meet with contempt or reſentment from conſiderate men.

Yea, ſo reſpectable is nature, that attempts of this kind ſcarcely ſucceed even among fools, unleſs the ſubject is ſome way diſguiſed, or accompanied with improper circumſtances; even as a wiſe man may ſeem ridiculous when inſulted by ſcorners, or when compelled to appear in public with a fool's cap.

But I have the leſs need to enlarge upon this, as the comelineſs of nature, the deformity of every deviation from it, and the natural conſequences which providence ſo generally makes uſe of, as ſanctions to the laws of nature, have been copiouſly diſplayed by many of the moſt ingenious modern writers; nor need I enlarge to the friends of written revelation, in ſhewing that the clear and explicit voice of God expreſſed there, always ſtrongly ſupports his more ſilent language ſuggeſted by nature, or the mutual relations or dependencies of his works.

My

My purpoſe at preſent, is to remind the friends of revelation, of the particular care which the Deity hath taken, to ſuperintend, and regulate nature by his word, in one of the capital concerns of mankind, conſidered either as individuals, or as connected in ſociety; I mean, the mutual propenſity between the ſexes.

This we may well call a capital concern of human life, when we reflect that hence ariſe the neareſt, and moſt endearing connections; hence ariſes the relation of huſband and wife, hence the relation of parents and children, brothers and ſiſters, and many others. In a word, we may call it the hinge of all kindred, or the capital link of the chain, that binds ſociety together; and the hiſtory of mankind clearly ſhews, that the moſt important revolutions of ſtates and kingdoms, have turned upon this hinge.

This propenſity is founded in the immediate workmanſhip of God, who originally formed mankind male and female, and from the marriage of one man with one woman, hath produced all the tribes who inhabit the earth; and the adequate proportion of males and females ſtill obſerved in the world, is pertinently urged by our

moſt diſtinguiſhed writers, in oppoſition to the atheiſt, as one of the moſt convincing arguments of a deſigning providence.

Tho' the various tribes of inferior animals were likewiſe formed male and female, yet from all we can obſerve, it doth not appear that any thing further was hereby intended by providence, than the continuance of each after their kind. For among them, the mutual propenſity of the ſexes ſeems in general to be only caſual; it appears at the proper ſeaſons to ſubſerve that end, and ceaſeth when that end is accompliſhed: nor does it appear neceſſary that it ſhould be more permanent; for, with them, inſtinct in a great meaſure ſupplies the place of education, and they are ſoon able to ſhift for themſelves. The ſame inſtinct likewiſe, in the moſt conſiderable of the various kinds, leads both old and young, to unite together in flocks or ſwarms, without any ſenſe of the tie of parentage or kindred; a tie which is to them the leſs neceſſary, as they are but little moleſted by thoſe various paſſions which ſo often counteract nature in mankind.

Among mankind, on the other hand, the young are for years weak and defenceleſs, unſkilled,

unſkilled, and unable to ſhift for themſelves, ſo require all that time to be reared, at the great expence of the continual care and induſtry of the parents. This long-continued care, promotes two wiſe ends of providence; it ſerves to ſtrengthen the natural affection of the parents, and make it laſting as their lives; and it ſerves to promote in the minds of the children, a durable ſenſe of dependance, gratitude, and reſpect to their parents, while it lays at the ſame time a ſtrong foundation for mutual friendſhip among themſelves.

That this chain of affection might be preſerved, and parents encouraged to undergo the long-continued cares and fatigues which attend the rearing a numerous family, it was neceſſary that the firſt link of that chain on which the reſt depended, ſhould be ſtrong and durable; accordingly, the Author of nature hath provided, that, in the human ſpecies, the propenſity of the ſexes ſhould be more ſtrong and conſtant than in other animals: not only ſo;—he hath ſuperadded to the common propenſity of nature, and ſtrongly blended with it, a ſuperior ſentiment of delicacy and honour, of tender affection, and endearing love, which other animals

animals ſeem to be ignorant of; a ſentiment that partakes indeed much of the diſtinguiſhing character of individuals, but which in thoſe of the moſt amiable character, appears always in the greateſt perfection; and the general fond taſte for real hiſtories, or works of imagination, deſcribing either the ſimplicity, or the refinements of that ſentiment, is a ſufficient, yea a ſtriking proof, that it has a real, a univerſal foundation in human nature.

But this is not all. The Author of nature hath ſeen meet to ſtrengthen this ſentiment, and guard it againſt corruption, by dignifying it with manifeſt tokens of honour from himſelf; while he ſtrongly denounces his diſpleaſure againſt the corruption of it. What honour do we ſee put upon human nature in general, and upon the conjugal tie in particular, in God himſelf condeſcending to be the conductor of the firſt bride to her huſband!

Tho' man hath, by diſobedience, forfeited the friendſhip of his maker; yet as God intends to ſhew mercy to many, he for their ſakes, extends his long-ſuffering to all; and gives manifeſt proofs that he nearly intereſts himſelf in the concerns of the human race.

And

And tho' the corruption of nature hath perhaps no where appeared more glaring, than in the abuſe of the natural propenſity of the ſexes; yet he ſtill continues to put honour on the conjugal tie, which he himſelf at firſt introduced. Four thouſand years after the fall the inſpired ſcriptures declare afreſh, "Marriage is honourable in "all, and the bed undefiled; but whore-"mongers and adulterers, God will judge." And when Immanuel, *God with us*, was found in faſhion as a man, he honoured a marriage in Galilee with his preſence.

Among the various images, which the ſcriptures borrow from natural relations, and the correſponding affections, to illuſtrate the concern of God about his people, an eſpecial regard we find is had to the conjugal relation, which is more frequently and copiouſly inſiſted on than any other. Thus God is repreſented as a huſband, related to his church by a marriage-covenant, that binds her to be wholly for him, and not for another; and which at the ſame time gives her the ſtrongeſt ſecurity for the conſtancy of his love: and thus, as the love of an affectionate huſband can bear no rivalſhip, but naturally kindles into burning jealouſy againſt every ſtranger,

ſtranger, who would divide with him the love of his ſpouſe, or by any means corrupt the ſimplicity of her affection; ſo God commends the purity, the fervency, and ſincerity of his love to his church, by many awful expreſſions of his jealouſy, which is often deſcribed as burning like fire. Yea *jealous*, is expreſsly adopted as one of the names of God, and a name by which he delights often to be diſtingniſhed; as it is ſaid, Ex. xxxiv. 14. "Thou ſhalt worſhip no other "God; for Jehovah, whoſe name is Jealous, "is a Jealous God."

This ſerves to convey to us a moſt reſpectable, yea, we may add a moſt amiable illuſtration of the nature of God's wrath. For when we conſider, as the ſcripture would have us, the whole character of God as fitly ſummed up in Love; what elſe is his wrath but the reſentment of jealous love, repelling and baniſhing far away every thing of a malignant nature, every thing unamiable, or in a word, every thing that would marr the mutual intercourſe of the pureſt joy of the moſt fervent love; even as the ſun ſhining in his ſtrength, drives far away the oppoſite darkneſs?

We

We are apt to run into a miſtake about the jealouſy, or wrath of God, as if it conveyed ſome notion of perturbation, and conſequently of imperfection in the Deity; whereas in truth, the perturbation takes place only in the breaſts of his malignant adverſaries. We are apt, I ſay, to run into this miſtake, becauſe we find that the reſentment of injured love cannot take place in the breaſt of a man, without marring for a ſeaſon his joy, ſo interrupting his enjoyment of love. But when we think of the Deity, we muſt conceive *Him* as bleſſed for ever, without interruption of happineſs.—Conſtantly and invariably oppoſite to all evil, even as he is infinitely and invariably good in himſelf: ſo that without the leaſt abatement of his boundleſs happineſs, he can at once ſmile on his friends, and frown on his foes. This is ſome way repreſented to us by his eſcorting his choſen people Iſrael in the cloudy pillar, which, while it gave joyful light to them, with dreadful darkneſs frowned upon their enemies.

Jealouſy, we find, was a diſtinguiſhing peculiarity in the character of the God of Iſrael; for the gods of the Gentiles were by no means jealous gods. They eaſily admit-

ted others to rank with them in the ſame temple, and ſhare in the ſame honours; and as they never ſhewed any reſentment againſt ſuch partnerſhip, their worſhippers ſaw no reaſon to object againſt it. So the Romans, who honoured the gods of all the nations whom they conquered, had their Pantheon, a temple dedicated to the honour of all the gods; and long before that, the Philiſtines were complaiſant enough to give the enſigns of the God of Iſrael a place beſide their god in his temple: but the breach that was made on Dagon, and the ſudden plague, deſtroying multitudes of his worſhippers, gave ſtriking proofs that the God of Iſrael was *the Jealous God*, who ſhared not his honours with any other.

As the true God was thus diſtinguiſhed by his jealouſy, ſo we find him ſhewing great reſpect in his law, to the jealouſy of a man over his wife, by the inſtitution of the bitter water that cauſed the curſe, which could give evidence of her guilt or innocence, only by means of a conſtant, extraordinary, or miraculous providence; and this is the only conſtant miracle that we find ſupporting the law in private cauſes.

The

The extraordinary providence exerciſed over the nation of Iſræl in general, was a continued diſplay of the jealouſy of God. He loved that nation, it is ſaid, beyond all other nations; not as better than any of them, but on account of the fleſhly relation which they bore to the Saviour of the world, who was to ſpring from them: they, on the other hand, are repreſented by their untoward and adulterous behaviour, as many times vexing his ſpirit, and provoking him to chaſtiſe them like an enemy. Yet, after he had made uſe of any of the neighbouring nations to chaſtiſe them, he ſoon turned his diſpleaſure againſt thoſe nations, to check their vaunting, and puniſh their malice, ſhewing mercy at the ſame time to his people, and relieving them oftentimes when at their wits end: and thus his long ſuffering and mercy, in the midſt of repeated provocations, was continued towards them, till they had ſerved the purpoſe for which they became a nation, by giving birth to the Saviour, "The Word made fleſh." When their fleſhly relation to him being diſolved by their putting him to death, and the adulterous perfidy of their hearts proved to be incorrigible, by their continued oppoſition

to him and his apoſtles; God utterly rejected them, ſaying, "They continued not in "my covenant, and I regarded them not." —So they fell a prey to the ſword of the Romans.

From what has been ſaid, it appears, that the marriage-covenant between God and that nation, never took effect ſo as to bring them to the exalted happineſs propoſed by it in theſe words, "If ye walk in my ſtatutes, I "will walk among you, and will be your "God, and ye ſhall be my people." But when the national happineſs had come to its greateſt height in the days of Solomon, and when the kingdom of Judah was faſt filling up the meaſure of their iniquity, following the footſteps of the apoſtate houſe of Iſrael, and all the gracious intentions intimated in that covenant ſeemingly on the point of being defeated; then we find the Spirit of God, by the mouth of Iſaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and other prophets of that period, breaking forth into the boldeſt and moſt aſſured promiſes, of the moſt exalted happineſs to take place, by a moſt intimate union of the Deity with his church redeemed out of all nations, and to be related to him by a new and eternal marriage-covenant, that could never be made

void by any guilt or deficiency on their part.

The nation of Iſrael was ſeldom at any time, from firſt to laſt, without ſenſible tokens that God was not well pleaſed with their conduct; and any ſhort intervals which they enjoyed of reſpite and ſucceſs, were only faint ſhadows, of the ſuperior happineſs contained in the promiſe of better things to come by the Meſſiah. But in the days of the prophets now mentioned, when the glory of the kingdom of Judah and Iſrael was on the decline, and many prophecies were uttered, threatening in the moſt aſſured manner the utter extinction of that glory; then, under various images, particularly by images borrowed from the conjugal relation, were diſplayed the ſtrongeſt aſſurances, and moſt lively illuſtrations of the ſuperior happineſs contained in that promiſe. Hitherto no happineſs had been enjoyed but what was obſcured, more or leſs, with the frown of jealouſy; now the enjoyment of love in perfection, began to be exhibited in the moſt endearing light, by bolder and more lively promiſes. Take for a ſample the following from the numerous paſſages to this effect contained in the prophets. Iſa. lxii. 3, 5.

" Thou

" Thou ſhalt be a crown of glory in the
" hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in
" the hand of thy God; thou ſhalt no more
" be termed forſaken, neither ſhall thy land
" any more be termed deſolate: but thou
" ſhalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land
" Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee,
" and thy land ſhall be married; for as a
" young man marrieth a virgin, ſo ſhall
" thy ſons marry thee; and as the bride-
" groom rejoiceth over the bride, ſo ſhall
" thy God rejoice over thee." Jer. xxxiii.
8—11. " I will pardon all their iniquities—
" and it ſhall be to me a name of joy, a
" praiſe, and an honour before all the na-
" tions of the earth, who ſhall hear all the
" good that I do unto them, and they ſhall
" fear and tremble for all the goodneſs, and
" for all the proſperity, that I procure unto
" them. Thus ſaith the Lord, again there
" ſhall be heard in this place, the voice of
" joy, and the voice of gladneſs, the voice
" of the bridegroom, and the voice of the
" bride, the voice of them who ſhall ſay,
" praiſe the Lord of hoſts, for the Lord is
" good, for his mercy endureth for ever."
Hoſ. ii. 19, 20. " And I will betrothe thee
" unto me for ever, yea, I will betrothe

" thee

" thee unto me in righteouſneſs, and in " judgement, and in-loving kindneſs, and " in mercies; I will even betrothe thee unto " me in faithfulneſs, and thou ſhalt know " the Lord." And many others might be cited to the ſame purpoſe.

In the New Teſtament again, where we ſee the apoſtles boldly applying to Chriſt every divine perfection, and every peculiar title of honour by which the prophets had diſtinguiſhed the true God from all idols and creatures; we find due care is taken to diſtinguiſh him as the one huſband, to whom the church is eſpouſed, ſo as to be chargeable with idolatry, or ſpiritual adultery, in taking any other in his ſtead; ſo ſays Paul to the church or Corinth (2 Cor. xi. 2, 3.) " I am jealous over you with the jealouſy of " God, for I have eſpouſed you to one " huſband, to preſent you a chaſte virgin to " Chriſt; but I fear, leſt by any means, " as the ſerpent beguiled Eve thro' his ſub- " tilty, ſo your minds ſhould be corrupted " from ſimplicity (or ſingleneſs) towards " Chriſt." And the perfection of the happineſs of the church is deſcribed thus, Rev. xix. 7, 8, 9. " Let us be glad and exult, and " give honour to Him; for the marriage

" of

" of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath
" made herſelf ready. And to her was
" granted, that ſhe ſhould be arrayed in
" fine linen, clean and white; for the fine
" linen is the righteouſneſs as of the ſaints.
" And he ſaith unto me, write, bleſſed are
" they who are called unto the marriage-
" ſupper of the Lamb: and he ſaith unto
" me, theſe are the true ſayings of God."

Now, to come more particularly to the ſubject, it is time to obſerve, that Paul reminding the Epheſians of the mutual love between Chriſt and his church, ſets that love before chriſtian huſbands and their wives as a pattern, as well as a forcible argument to bind their conſciences to conjugal affection.

Young people, when firſt marriageable, are apt fondly to preſume, that the common propenſity formerly ſpoken of, will prove a ſufficient ſecurity for conjugal affection; but a little acquaintance with the world, ſoon diſcovers the vanity of this fond preſumption: and it is no ſmall proof of the corruption of human nature, that there ſhould be ſo much need for the aſſiſtance of the ſupernatural principles of the goſpel, to ſupport and preſerve an affection which has ſo ſtrong a foundation in nature. At the

ſame

ſame time, we muſt admire the condeſcenſion and friendly regard of the Deity, when we reflect that this affection, when ſupported and regulated by the Goſpel, is exalted to the rank of a chriſtian virtue, and an imitation of the ſon of God!

The paſſage which I am glancing at, runs thus, Eph. v. 22—33. "Wives be ſubject "to your own huſbands as unto the Lord. "For the huſband is head of the wife, even "as Chriſt is head of the church; and "he is the Saviour of the body. There- "fore as the church is ſubject to Chriſt, ſo "let the wives *be* to their own huſbands in "every thing. Huſbands, love your wives; "even as Chriſt alſo loved the church, and "gave himſelf for it, that he might ſanctify "it, cleanſing it with the waſhing of water "by the word; that he might preſent it to "himſelf a glorious church, not having "ſpot, or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing; but "that it ſhould be holy, and without "blemiſh. So ought men to love their "wives, as their own bodies: he who loveth "his wife, loveth himſelf; for no man ever "yet hated his own fleſh, but nouriſheth "and cheriſheth it, even as the Lord the "church; for we are members of his body,

" of his fleſh, and of his bones. For this
" cauſe ſhall a man leave his father and
" his mother, and ſhall be joined to his
" wife, and theſe two ſhall be one fleſh.
" This is a great myſtery, but I ſpeak con-
" cerning Chriſt and the church. Never-
" theleſs, let every one of you in particular,
" ſo love his wife even as himſelf; and let
" the wife reverence her huſband."

It is not in vain that the ſcripture ſpeaks in ſuch honourable terms of marriage, and brings ſuch ſacred and exalted motives to cultivate the affection that belongs to it. For as the will of God is, to confine the propenſity of the ſexes intirely within that honourable channel, ſo he loudly denounces his wrath againſt all abuſe of that propenſity, or indulgence of it any other way. When ſo confined, it ſerves to promote that noble affection of love, which imitates the Deity; when not ſo confined, it tends to the greateſt debaſement of human nature, both before God and man.

The law given by Chriſt to direct the conſciences of his diſciples in regard to marriage, is thus expreſſed by his apoſtle, 1 Cor. vii. 2. " To avoid fornications, let every
" man have his own wife, and let every
" woman

" woman have her own huſband." Thoſe acquainted with the ſcripture ſtyle will obſerve, that the word fornication frequently bears a more extenſive ſenſe there, than in our common diſcourſe. It denotes what we call adultery, Mat. v. 32. and xix. 9.; it denotes inceſt, 1 Cor. v. 1.; and it is uſed in Jude v. 7. to denote the ſin of Sodom. In the text juſt mentioned, the Greek expreſſion is plural, and ſhould have been accordingly ſo rendered by our tranſlators, as they have properly done it Mat. xv. 19. " Out of the heart, proceed evil thoughts, " adulteries, fornications, &c."

Sometimes the word fornication is attended with other words, giving a comprehenſive view of the evil practices which at other times are cenſured under that word when uſed alone; as Gal. v. 19. " Now the works " of the fleſh are manifeſt, which are theſe— " adultery, fornication, uncleanneſs, laſci- " viouſneſs." Theſe three laſt expreſſions are likewiſe claſſed together in 2 Cor. xii. 21. and Paul ſeems to have every thing of that kind in his eye, when, Eph. v. 3. he warns the Epheſians againſt fornication, and *all uncleanneſs*.

But when, as in our text, the expreſſion is found alone, and to extend its meaning, uſed in the plural; and that too, as reſpecting all the evils to be avoided by marriage; we muſt conceive the apoſtle's meaning to be no leſs than if he had ſaid, to avoid *all impurities*, or every abuſe of the natural propenſity, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own huſband; and that accordingly, by the chriſtian law, marriage is oppoſed to adultery, fornication, and *all* uncleanneſs.

What the impurities guarded againſt by the chriſtian law of marriage are, may be ſeen (beſides the paſſages already mentioned) in Lev. xviii. Rom. i. 26, 27. Col. iii. 5. 1 Tim. i. 10. and 1 Cor. vi. 9.

In the laſt of theſe texts, we find claſſed together among thoſe who ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God, adulterers, *effeminate*, abuſers of themſelves with mankind, thieves, &c. What our tranſlators could mean by giving us the *effeminate*, ranked in the midſt of the moſt heinous tranſgreſſors of the law of nature, is difficult to ſay. All who lead quiet lives, by cultivating the arts of peace, are deemed effeminate, by thoſe who are inured to the hardſhips of war; and civilized

nations in general appear effeminate to the more barbarous tribes who know not the refinements of civilization.

To me it appears paſt doubt, that the Greek word *malakoi*, ſhould in this place be rendered not *effeminate* but *ſelf-pollutors*. I am not the firſt who have made this obſervation, and agreeably thereto, the very ancient Syriac verſion tranſlates it by the ſame word, or a branch of the ſame word, that is uſed in expreſſing the ſin of Onan, Gen. xxxviii. 9. At any rate, the place where the word in queſtion ſtands, ſufficiently ſhews that it is intended to cenſure ſome ſort of uncleanneſs; and when we conſider it as diſtinguiſhed from the uncleanneſſes mentioned immediately before and after, no tranſlation, I apprehend, can appear more natural and eaſy than what has been already offered.

To what has been ſaid on the occaſional extent of the word fornication, we may connect likewiſe here the extenſive view of fornication given by Paul, 1 Theſ. iv. 3. 8. where he oppoſes it to the ſanctification and honour of a chriſtian's body, which he calls his veſſel, as elſewhere his tabernacle, "For this," ſays he, "is the will

"of

" of God, *even* your ſanctification, that " ye ſhould abſtain from fornication, that " every one of you ſhould know how to " poſſeſs his veſſel in ſanctification and " honour, not in the luſt of concupiſcence, " even as the Gentiles who know not God. " For God hath not called us unto un- " cleanneſs, but unto holineſs. He there- " fore who deſpiſeth, deſpiſeth not man, " but God, who hath alſo given unto us " his holy ſpirit." And laſtly, to this may be added, the very extenſive ſenſe of adultery given by the great chriſtian lawgiver, Mat. v. 27. " Ye have heard that it was " ſaid by them of old time, thou ſhalt not " commit adultery. But I ſay unto you, " that whoſoever looketh on a woman to " luſt after her, hath already committed " adultery with her in his heart."

What a ſource for conviction is here opened to all the human race! Who can look into this perfect law and ſay, I am clean? or who, as to this matter, can lay one hand upon his heart, and with the other, pointing to his neighbour, ſay, " Stand by, I am " holier than thou?" This one ſource of conviction, when duly attended to, is enough to darken the whole earth with deſpair. But how

how much more abundant is the cauſe of thankſgiving for the gracious and merciful appearance of Him, who could with propriety ſay, Joh. viii. 12, "I am the light "of the world; he who followeth me ſhall "not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall have the "light of life."

The grace that gave him, the Holy One, to ſuffer for the impure, appears the richer, when we reflect on the awful teſtimonies of God's fiery indignation againſt uncleanneſs recorded in ſcripture, as certain preſages of the wrath to come: ſo in Gen. xix. we find that God rained fire and brimſtone from heaven on the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, who are ſaid, chiefly in reſpect of their uncleanneſs, to have been wicked and ſinners before the Lord exceedingly. And in the new Teſtament, Jude v. 7. that people are ſaid to be ſet forth for an example, ſuffering the vengeance of eternal fire: in like manner Moſes, Lev. xviii. after giving a detail of the impurities of the Canaanites, for which ſuch terrible deſtruction came upon them, concludes the account thus, v. 27. "For all theſe abominations have the men "of the land done, who were before you, "and the land is defiled." And he warns

Iſrael,

Iſrael, v. 28—30. "That (ſays he) the "land ſpue you not out alſo, when you de- "file it, as it ſpued out the nations that "were before you; for whoſoever ſhall "commit any of theſe abominations, even "the ſouls who commit them ſhall be cut "off from among their people. Therefore "ſhall you keep mine ordinance, that you "commit not any one of theſe abominable "cuſtoms which were committed before "you, and that you defile not yourſelves "therein; I am the Lord your God." Agreeably to this, among the reaſons given for the captivity of Jeruſalem, and the deſtruction of many of the people, Jerem. v. 7, 8, takes notice of their prevailing uncleanneſs: and Ezek. xxii. 9, 10, 11, points out the ſeveral ſorts of it. The houſe of Iſrael, or the ten tribes, ſuffered the like judgment before Judah, for following the abominable cuſtoms of the nations who had been deſtroyed to give place to them, and of the nations who now lived round about them; and theſe laſt nations again ſuffered the like judgments according to the predictions of Jeremiah, and the other prophets of that age: all which manifold diſplay of deſolating and deſtroying judgement, was a

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pledge of the certainty of God's determination, Zeph. iii. 8. where he ſays, " All the " earth ſhall be devoured with the fire of " my jealouſy."

Here we may juſtly add, that the nations called chriſtian, trained up under the influence of a perverted goſpel, have not abounded leſs than the ancient heathens in any ſpecies of uncleanneſs, even as the New Teſtament prophecies had foretold. In ſcripture, this luſt is pointed out as cloſely connected with pride and covetouſneſs; and often as ſubſervient to idolatry, which is called adultery in the ſpiritual ſenſe; in Sodom, it was connected, Ezek. xvi. 49. with pride, fulneſs of bread, idleneſs, and unmerciful covetouſneſs reſpecting the poor. Iſrael is complained of, as enticed, through fornication, to idolatry. Some of the firſt New Teſtament churches, are cenſured for having among them thoſe who taught to commit fornication, and to eat things ſacrificed unto idols; and Peter propheſying of the corruption of chriſtianity, and the pernicious ways into which many would be ſeduced, through the art and covetouſneſs of falſe teachers, takes occaſion to obſerve, 2 Pet. ii. 9, 10. " The Lord knoweth how to reſerve the

" unjuſt unto the day of judgment to be " puniſhed;" immediately adding, " but " chiefly thoſe who walk after the fleſh, in " the luſt of uncleanneſs, and deſpiſing " Government, &c."

Now the better to underſtand by what means uncleanneſs, in all its branches, has abounded as much under the profeſſion of chriſtianity, as ever it did under heathenism, it will be proper to conſider more particularly the chriſtian law of marriage, (1 Cor. vii. 2.) of which we have only as yet taken a general view.

And, 1ſt. That law points out the reaſon that ſhould bind the conſcience of a chriſtian in regard to marriage, and ſhew him whether he ought to marry or not. He muſt marry " to avoid fornications," or all impurities; if he can avoid theſe without marriage, he ought not to marry; if he does, he does not marry in the Lord, or in ſubjection to the Lord's authority. That this is the ſenſe of the law, is evident from what follows, ver. 7—9, where the apoſtle ſays, " I would that all men were even as I my- " ſelf, but every man hath his proper gift " of God, one after this manner, and ano- " ther after that; I ſay therefore to the un-

" married

" married and widows, it is good for them,
" if they abide even as I. But if they can-
" not contain, let them marry, for it is bet-
" ter to marry than to burn."

2d. It is evident then, that it is not left intirely to a man's own option whether he ſhall marry or not; even as it came not of his own choice, that he is now this or that way gifted of God: the divine law reſpecting the gift that God hath given him, fixes his duty for him. " All men, ſays Chriſt, Math. xix. " 11, 12. cannot receive this ſaying (pre-
" fering a ſingle life); but they to whom it
" is given:" then he ſpeaks of ſome eunuchs who are born ſo, of others made ſo of men, and of a third ſort who make themſolves ſo for the kingdom of heaven's ſake; adding this plain law, " He who is able to
" receive (the aforementioned ſaying) let
" him receive it." The two former ſorts, being utterly diſqualified for marriage by natural defect, cannot propoſe to marry without offering a high inſult to humanity, and the divine law. The third ſort muſt be thoſe, who tho' in ſome degree capable of marriage, and accordingly inclined to it, have yet no ſuch inclination, but what may be ſubverted or ſubdued by the mind's being

engaged in a ſerious and laudable purſuit, of which none ſurely can deſerve the name better, than a zealous purſuit of the intereſts of God's kingdom; and this view of the matter appears quite agreeable to the whole ſtrain of Paul's reaſoning, 1 Cor. vii. Therefore, when we ſee a man profeſſing ſubjection to Chriſt, and chuſing to lead a ſingle life, the moſt favourable judgment we can form of him is, that he is either a eunuch by abſolute natural defect, or that it is given him of God to become ſo, for the kingdom of heaven's ſake.

3d. If the reaſon given in the chriſtian law, is the *only* reaſon that can make it warrantable for a chriſtian to marry; then ſurely *that* is the only honourable reaſon that his mouth can openly avow as binding his conſcience. It is proper to attend to this, becauſe when once, by the influence of evil cuſtom, people are induced to diſavow, or be aſhamed of the only honourable reaſon, then we may be aſſured of hearing the baſe motives of vanity, ambition, and covetouſneſs, not only openly avowed, but alſo effectually operating among men, to the deſtruction of the natural comfort of the married ſtate. But why ſhould a chriſtian man

man be aſhamed to own, that he marries becauſe he cannot otherwiſe poſſeſs his body in ſanctification and honour? or can the chaſteſt virgin, when ſolicited to marry, give a more decent reaſon for her compliance, than, that ſhe accepted a huſband to preſerve her female honour pure and unſpotted? For tho' a woman who commits fornication forfeits her honour, ſhe who marries loſes nothing of her honour, but rather places it in greater ſecurity, by accepting the love and protection of a huſband.

4th. Seeing the chriſtian law, oppoſes marriage to all impurities, it is evident that thoſe men greatly err, who have endeavoured to tarniſh the honour of marriage, as if it were ſome way inconſiſtent with the exalted purity and ſanctification of the chriſtian life.

This error took its riſe from religious pride, endeavouring to refine upon the goſpel rules of holineſs: and here, upon a general view of the hiſtory of religion, we may lay it down for a maxim, that wherever we find men zealous to exalt holineſs above the plain words of the goſpel, and condemning any amuſement or enjoyment of life, not condemned by it, there we may be ſure to find ſome

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of the moſt important precepts of the goſpel greatly neglected, or altogether ſet aſide; thus the goſpel informs us, that the Phariſees refined on the precepts of Moſes againſt bodily defilement, making many additional rules that had no foundation in his law, while they neglected the weightier matters of that law; and thus it is well known that the Roman church has, for many ages, made many things unlawful, not condemned by the goſpel, while they have been induſtrious to render of none effect every divine precept. And though the hypocriſy of that church, has for ſome ages been greatly expoſed by proteſtants, yet even among proteſtant churches, the ſame ſpirit of religious pride may be found, in ſome degree, ſtill working after its old faſhion, condemning ſome things not condemned by the goſpel, while it deceitfully undermines, and oppoſes, the great ſcope and deſign of the goſpel precepts.

When ſpiritual pride, in this manner, began to leſſen the honour of marriage, under pretence of promoting ſuperior purity and holineſs, it is natural to think that the ſcripture-doctrine of mortification and diſconformity to the world, would be corrupted to

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ſerve this pride; and particularly that an unfair uſe would be made of Paul's commendations of a ſingle life, and his preferring it to the married ſtate. Accordingly, church-hiſtory informs us how the monaſtic life was introduced, by extravagant commendations of virginity and ſingle life, till the honour of marriage in general was greatly ſunk, and marriage forbidden to numerous claſſes of men altogether, by which means uncleanneſs reigned thro' the nations called chriſtian, attended by the moſt inhuman cruelty, now found neceſſary, to conceal its effects.

It is proper therefore to obſerve, in what reſpects Paul prefers the ſingle to the married life. And this we ſhall find he does, not by throwing any reflections on the purity of the conjugal affection, or union, but in reſpect of the worldly care and anxiety introduced by it; and becauſe, when perſecution grew violent, married perſons were expoſed to much greater perplexities and hardſhips than thoſe in a ſingle ſtate. In general, the great advantage of the ſingle life, in reſpect of which he counts them happier than the married, lies in this, that being leſs entangled with worldly cares, they are at greater liberty to exert themſelves in

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the ſervice of Chriſt, to travel about as the ſervice of the goſpel may require, and when perſecuted in one city to fly to another. So his words run thus, 1 Cor. vii. 32—35. "But I would have you without carefulneſs. "He who is unmarried careth for the "things that belong to the Lord, how he "may pleaſe the Lord; but he that is mar-"ried, careth for the things of the world "how he may pleaſe his wife. There is "difference alſo between a wife and a vir-"gin. The unmarried woman careth for "the things of the Lord, that ſhe may be "holy, both in body and in ſpirit; but ſhe "who is married, careth for the things that "are of the world, how ſhe may pleaſe her "huſband. And this I ſpeak for your own "profit; not that I may caſt a ſnare upon "you (or rather a *cord*, referring to the "Jewiſh language about binding and looſ-"ing the conſcience; as if he ſaid, not to "make you ſuſpect it ſinful to marry) but "for that which is comely, and that you "may attend upon the Lord without diſ-traction," that is, worldly care.

If then, comparing a married with an unmarried profeſſor of the faith, we find the former more attentive to the ſervice of

Chriſt and the goſpel, than the latter, we muſt at the ſame time, according to Paul's doctrine, pronounce him more eminent in holineſs and purity of life than the other. And if we ſhould ſee one, otherwiſe diſpoſed for marriage, determined to chuſe a ſingle life thro' carefulneſs about the world, or the eager purſuit of gain, and fear of expence—we cannot ſee the authority of the Lord influencing him at all, but rather a baſe, ſordid paſſion, wholly belonging to the corruption of nature, overcoming a natural and honourable propenſity. As for thoſe, who, under pretence of diſconformity to the world, and devoting themſelves wholly to Chriſt, withdrew from the cities where churches were planted, to lead monaſtic lives in the wilderneſs, we muſt conſider them rather as departing from the preſence of the Lord, and as cowardly deſerters from the appointed field for fighting the good fight of faith, which muſt be maintained with earneſt contention before the face of its numerous enemies. The ſame ſort of people who firſt retired to deſert places, were afterwards lodged in the ſecret chambers, or in cells, cloiſters, or monaſteries. Againſt all ſuch hypocritical pretences to nearer con-

nection with Chriſt, he himſelf forwarns us, Mat. xxiv. 23—26. "If any man ſhall "ſay to you, lo, here is Chriſt, or there, "believe it not: If they ſhall ſay unto "you, behold he is in the deſert, go not "forth; behold he is in the ſecret cham-"bers, believe it not."

Tho' proteſtants have been taught to exclaim againſt the hypocriſy of the Roman church in this, as well as other reſpects, yet we may eaſily perceive the ſame ſpirit cheriſhed among them, and their religious leaders, notwithſtanding all the reſtraints divine providence in theſe latter ages has laid them under. And as nothing ſerves more to propagate irreligion and looſeneſs of manners, than hypocriſy eaſily diſcovered; ſo a manifeſt connection between theſe effects and their proper ſource, may very commonly be perceived in the families of devout proteſtants. It has been often obſerved, that the children of the regularly-devout ſort of people, are frequently found remarkably irreligious, and looſe in their conduct. And is it not equally obſervable, that ſuch of them as take a religious turn, are, generally ſpeaking, no leſs remarkable for covetouſneſs and ſelf-conceit? How rare a thing is

it to find a man of a religious character, bringing up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Is it not far more common, to find ſuch, training up their children in religious pride, and an eager purſuit of worldly gain? And when the children come to be marriageable, which we may reckon the critical period, on which the comfort of their lives as well as their character muſt in a great meaſure depend, how few parents are at pains to inſtruct them in the chriſtian law about marriage, or to impreſs their minds with a ſenſe of the fear of God in regard to it? And how many, through covetous or ambitious views, either diſſuade their children from marriage, or ſo diſcourage their particular choice, as either to break their ſpirits, or compel them to vicious courſes? but whatever other vicious courſes they may be compelled to, they are ſtrongly charged againſt indulging themſelves with looſe women, this being attended, not only with conſiderable expence, but alſo with great riſk of public loſs of character.

And here it may be obſerved, that the diſcipline of many churches, tho' very remiſs in regard to other worldly luſts, is often very inquſitive and ſharp-ſighted, to detect

and cenſure this ſpecies of uncleanneſs—I mean, betwixt a free man and a free woman, which is diſtinguiſhed by the name of ſimple fornication.

On this occaſion it may be proper to obſerve, in what light this practice was conſidered among the heathens, when the apoſtles wrote to the firſt churches, condemning it as an evil by no means to be tolerated among them.

It appears from the famous ſpeech of Auguſtus, rebuking the gentlemen batchelors of Rome, whoſe number he obſerved, with diſpleaſure, to be very great, that to live in fornication, was conſidered as a looſe and diſhonourable way of living, compared with the honourable ſtate of marriage: but tho' a lifetime ſpent in this practice, eſpecially when the number of unmarried men was ſo great as to be a manifeſt damage to the ſtate, might draw the diſeſteem, and even the reſentment of the public; yet, ſetting aſide this complex view of the matter, it would ſeem that occaſional inſtances of this practice, were ſcarcely deemed ſufficient to fix a blot upon a man's character, even by thoſe who were ready to ſhew high reſentment againſt adultery, and againſt diſhonouring

nouring a virgin. The practice being common was generally winked at; nor do I find that the heathens had any laws making it criminal in the man, though the univerſal voice pronounced infamy on the woman.

In conſequence of this view of the matter among the heathens, it appears from the decree of the apoſtles, Acts xv. 29. as well as from their epiſtles to the churches, that the Gentile converts were averſe to admit any conviction of the ſinfulneſs of fornication, even after they had been convinced of their former wickedneſs in many other reſpects. So the apoſtles in that decree (which may be called the charter of the Gentiles freedom from the Jewiſh law) finding it neceſſary to charge the Gentiles to abſtain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things ſtrangled, charges them, at the ſame time, to abſtain from fornication; adding, "from which if you keep yourſelves, you "ſhall do well," as finding in them no other evil practice they were diſpoſed to defend.

Yet long after this decree was delivered to the churches, we find it was a matter of no ſmall anxious care to the apoſtle Paul, to enforce upon them the precept againſt fornication:

mication: yea, he finds it neceſſary, in a particular manner, to refute the reaſonings that were advanced in its defence among the members of the Corinthian church; and this he does upon principles of honour, elevating the mind to a tenor of conduct ſuperior to what is enforced merely by common law; principles of honour to which they were entire ſtrangers before they knew Chriſt: even as we may find a nobleman, animated by a ſenſe of dignity, to ſhew more honour in his actions, than is to be found with thoſe who aim no higher than to eſcape the penalties of the laws of their country.

I own indeed, that viewing this matter attentively, even by the light of nature, a good deal may be ſaid againſt fornication; for it may be ſaid, and I think juſtly too, that it debaſes human nature, and ſets man too much on a level with the brutes, while he indulges the propenſity which he has in common with them, at the rate of throwing aſide the principles of love, and honour, which we formerly obſerved to be likewiſe natural as well as peculiar to him. And here, various conſiderations might be pertinently urged, reſpecting the conſequence of this practice; ſuch as, the riſk of improper education,

education, infamy, and other diſadvantages to the offspring, &c.; but I chuſe to confine myſelf to the practice itſelf in the ſimple and primary view of it.

Now, I can eaſily conceive a nobleman of a lively ſenſe of honour, though a ſtranger to the goſpel, reſiſting a temptation to commit fornication, by ſuch reaſoning as this— "Shall I debaſe myſelf to become one fleſh "with a wench, who, the firſt opportunity, "may admit my footman or my ſlave to "the ſame intimacy? no; it wounds my "honour,—I ſcorn the thought!" And perhaps it is chiefly, or only in this point of view, that infidel gentlemen, who yet retain any quick ſenſe of honour, can be led to ſee any thing diſhonourable in fornication.

But this way of reaſoning loſes much of its force, when we would addreſs ourſelves to the lower claſs of mankind; for tho' we ſhould inſiſt ever ſo much on the peculiar dignity of human nature, they are ſo much accuſtomed to find their maſters, or ſuperiors, paying little or no more regard to them, than they do to their brutes, that this kind of reaſoning does not greatly engage their attention: we have indeed the leſs occaſion to wonder at this ſtupidity in our

lower

lower ſort of people, when we reflect, that moſt of our gentlemen of rank and figure, who can at any time declaim fluently upon the dignity of human nature, and are ready to pledge their honour upon every occaſion, do yet diſcover very little honour in their actions, particularly with regard to the matter we are now treating of; ſo that it is hard to ſay where their honour lies, except it be in their readineſs to reſent an affront—when they dare.

But it is the peculiar glory of the goſpel, as a ſupernatural revelation, that it is adapted to beget in the lower claſs of mankind, the nobleſt ſentiments of honour, and ſuch an exalted ſenſe of the dignity of human nature, as far ſurpaſſes the comprehenſion of the great men of the world.

Now, it is obſervable that the Apoſtle introduces his argument againſt fornication, 1 Cor. vi. 11. by reminding the believing Corinthians of the high dignity to which they were advanced by their connection with Chriſt, and ſome of them from the baſeſt condition of the greateſt defilement: for giving a liſt of the more infamous characters that exclude men from the kingdom of God, fornicators, thieves, drunkards, &c.—he immediately

mediately adds, ver. 11. "And ſuch were "ſome of you; but ye are waſhed, but ye "are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified, in the "name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the ſpirit "of our God." And we find the apoſtles in all their epiſtles, dealing much in reminding chriſtians of the high dignity of their calling, when animating them to the ſpirited exerciſe of the chriſtian virtues; even as the guardians of young princes or noblemen, inculcate upon them their exalted birth and high expectations, in order to elevate their minds above every thing that is baſe and ſordid.

The news of a ſlave being adopted into the family of a great king, to rank with princes of the blood, would carry a high ſound in this world; but what a poor idea would it have conveyed to the apoſtles, compared to the high ſenſe they had of the dignity of thoſe, whom they ſaw exalted from the baſeſt condition to be in Chriſt Jeſus? See how Paul addreſſes theſe ſame Corinthians in the firſt chapter of his firſt epiſtle, ver. 26, &c. "Ye ſee your calling "brethren—God hath choſen the baſe "things of the world—But of him are ye "*in* Chriſt Jeſus." Thus he addreſſes ano-

ther church, " To the church of the Theſſa-
" lonians, *in* God the father, and *in* the
" Lord Jeſus Chriſt." And ſee what a bold ſtyle he uſes concerning many of the faithful of old who were expelled from ſociety, Heb. xi. 38. " They, of whom the
" world was not worthy, wandered in de-
" ſerts, &c."

Hence we find him ſo often animating his brethren in ſuch language as this, " Where-
" fore holy brethren, partakers of the hea-
" venly calling—I beſeech you that ye walk
" worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are
" called, &c.—Worthy of God who hath
" called you into his kingdom and glory,
" &c." And while he conſiders all the reſt of the world as in darkneſs, and under the power of Satan, he calls upon them as the ſons of God, and children of the light, to live as became ſuch; reminding them that all things that are reproved or blameable, are now made manifeſt in their proper deformity by the light of the goſpel, and therefore that it became them to purſue a more exalted morality, not eſtimating the difference between good and evil, by the narrow, dark, and corrupted maxims of worldly ſociety,

but

but by the clear and forcible light of the goſpel.

Now it would ſeem that the Corinthian plea was to this effect; in ſimple fornication, where both parties are free and willing, no injury is done to ſociety in general, nor to our neighbour in particular; ſo the law that charges us to work no ill to our neighbour is no way broken, nor do we tranſgreſs any law of our country; therefore we cannot ſee why the practice ſhould be deemed unlawful: beſides, by this practice, we do nothing againſt nature, but rather comply with its dictates. Hath not the Author of nature formed the ſexes, with a mutual propenſity, even as he hath formed meats for the belly, and the belly for meats? Why then ſhould not nature be complyed with in the one caſe, as well as in the other? This appears to have been the force of their plea; and I apprehend that in that plea, they ſuggeſted the ſubſtance of all the arguments, that have yet been advanced by our infidel reaſoners in defence of fornication.

Let us now quote the text itſelf, where the apoſtle, after his uſual manner of reaſoning, firſt in few words produces the ſtrength of their plea, and then follows it cloſe with

his anſwer, 1 Cor. vi. 12, 13, 14. "*All* "*things are lawful unto me*; but all things are "not expedient: *all things are lawful for me*; "but I will not be brought under the "power of any. *Meats for the belly, and the* "*belly for meats*; but God ſhall deſtroy "both it and them. Now the body is not "for fornication, but for the Lord, and the "Lord for the body: and God hath both "raiſed up the Lord, and will alſo raiſe up "us by his own power."

Here, it is plain, that Paul reaſons with them on their own maxims, and ſhews, that even admitting theſe maxims to be true, they were not ſufficient to ſupport the concluſions attempted to be built upon them. Be it ſo, as if he had ſaid, that all things which may be done without injuring my neighbour are lawful; yet ſo long as I retain any ſenſe of the dignity of my own nature, I muſt ſtill judge how far it becomes me to exerciſe my liberty: for it may often happen that my going to the utmoſt bounds of my liberty, may prove diſgraceful to myſelf, even though I give no perſon juſt cauſe to complain of an injury; ſo that though all things, in this view, may be lawful for me, yet all things are not expedient.

Seeing then it becomes me to conſider myſelf as ſuperior to all my natural appetites or propenſities, and accordingly to hold them in ſubjection to myſelf, or in regular ſubordination to my capital intereſt and honour; I will not ſuffer any one of them to enſlave me, or divert me from purſuing the great end of my being; ſo that though all things be lawful for me, I will not be brought under the power of any.

But ſtill you inſiſt, that what you plead for, is no way diſhonourable to our nature, and this you would illuſtrate by bringing a parallel caſe, ſaying, "Meats for the belly, "and the belly for meats." True; but even this maxim muſt be taken with ſome limitation; for the body is not always to be ſupported by meats received into the belly; but God ſhall deſtroy both it and them, and yet raiſe up our bodies to ſubſiſt in another manner altogether, in a life far ſuperior to the preſent: and therefore, even our care about the belly, muſt be ſubordinate to our expectations, of that more honourable and happy ſtate, to which our bodies are deſtined. But I ſay further; I deny the two caſes to be parallel; and I affirm, that the body is

not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

Hence it appears, that the apoſtle lays the ſtreſs of his argument, on that ſupernatural connection between the Lord, and the bodies as well as ſpirits of his people, which was founded in his taking part with them in fleſh and blood, and which is maintained and enjoyed among them, by his ſpirit dwelling with their ſpirits, in their mortal bodies; or their partaking with him in that holy ſpirit, whereby he is glorified in ſoul and body, and made exceeding joyful at God's right-hand: and the certain conſequence of this connection is, the reſurrection of their bodies, as the apoſtle immediately adds, "And God hath both raiſed up the "Lord Jeſus, and will alſo raiſe up us by "his own power."

Accordingly, the immediate tendency or effect of this connection, even in this life, when chriſtians begin to reliſh and enjoy it, is to give them an elevation of mind beyond the reſt of mankind, who are all in ſcripture conſidered as having their minds debaſed, by the influence of that ſpirit, which anciently informed the body of the ſerpent, whoſe earthly, ſenſual, and debaſed temper, as

conducting

conducting the minds of his offspring, is ſtrongly marked in the words of the curſe pronounced upon him, Gen. iii. 14. "Upon "thy belly ſhalt thou go, and duſt ſhalt "thou eat, all the days of thy life." And this elevation of mind leads all who have obtained it, ſo to live in the world, as becomes ſons of God, and heirs of a kingdom; even as they hope to reign in their bodies raiſed from the dead, over the whole reſtored creation, in partnerſhip with the Son of God. So the apoſtle upbraids all who name the name of Chriſt, or profeſs connection with him, as extremely inſenſible of that connection, if they are not influenced by that elevation of mind, that fellowſhip with him in his ſpirit, which leads to a more noble way of thinking and acting, than takes place among the reſt of mankind; even as the guardians of a young prince or nobleman would readily upbraid him, if they ſaw his actions unworthy of his birth and high expectations.

Agreeably to this, the next words of the apoſtle (1 Cor. vi. 15—17.) run thus, "Know ye not that your bodies are the "members of Chriſt? Shall I then take "the members of Chriſt, and make them

"the

" the members of an harlot? Far be it!
" What! know you not that he who is
" joined to an harlot is one body? for two
" (ſaith he), ſhall be one fleſh; but he who
" is joined to the Lord, is one ſpirit." Then he proceeds, bringing all the moſt forcible motives in view at once, to forbid fornication of every ſort, as directly, and at firſt inſtance diſhonourable to the body; whereas every other luſt, however conſequentially diſhonourable, both to body and ſpirit, operates, or is intended to operate firſt, on ſome object without the body. " Flee fornicati-
" on," ſays he, ver. 18—20. " Every ſin
" that a man doth is without the body, but
" he who committeth fornication, ſinneth
" againſt his own body. What, know ye
" not that your body is the temple of the
" Holy Ghoſt which is in you? which ye
" have of God, and ye are not your own?
" For ye are bought with a price: there-
" fore glorify God in your body, and in
" your ſpirit, which are God's."

Thus, along with the arguments which he had before advanced, he now urges the high and invaluable price of their redemption, paid by the Son of God, when he laid down his life for them; and this as a power-

ful

ful motive to engage them to honour in their body and ſpirit the living and true God, who provided ſuch a ranſom for them, and who thereby bought them for his own ſervice; even the ſame motive that is urged by another apoſtle (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.) to withdraw his friends in the faith from their former vain converſation, when he ſays, "Foraſmuch as ye know that ye were not "redeemed with corruptible things, as "ſilver and gold, from your vain conver-"ſation received by tradition from your "fathers, but with the precious blood of "Chriſt, as of a lamb, without blemiſh, and "without ſpot."

Now, upon a review of the apoſtle's reaſoning, though it is evident that he lays the main ſtreſs on ſupernatural argument, yet I am far from thinking that he excludes what was formerly hinted as ſuggeſted by nature, in regard to the honour of the human body. Yea, it is far more agreeable to the tenor of his reaſoning here, and to the language of his epiſtles in general, with reſpect to fornication, to conclude, that in this caſe, as well as in various others, the ſuperadded light of the goſpel, more clearly evinces and enforces what the light of nature ſuggeſted; and not

only ſo, but is likewiſe fitted to rouſe the heart from that lethargy into which it is ſunk by evil cuſtoms while deſtitute of the hope of a bleſſed reſurrection, ſo to clear the eye of the mind to perceive more quickly and diſtinctly the ſimple dictates of nature, as the preſence of the ſun makes the difference of many objects ſtrike the eye at once, that were but more faintly diſcerned while only the moon and ſtars appeared. For ſuch is the debaſement of mankind, when deſtitute of the goſpel, or among whom the goſpel has been greatly corrupted, that in regard to "what they know naturally "as brute beaſts, in theſe things they corrupt "themſelves." Hence we ſo often find the apoſtles calling chriſtians to diſtinguiſh themſelves from other Gentiles immerſed in ſtupidity and ignorance, Eph. iv. 17—20. "This I ſay therefore and teſtify in the "Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as the "other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their "minds, having the underſtanding darkned, "being alienated from the life of God, "through the ignorance that is in them, be-"cauſe of the blindneſs of their heart; who "being paſt feeling, have given themſelves "over to laſciviouſneſs, to work all un-

" cleanneſs with greedineſs: but ye have " not ſo learned Chriſt, &c." And Ch. v. 11—13. " Have no fellowſhip with the un- " fruitful works of darkneſs, but rather re- " prove them; for it is a ſhame even to " ſpeak of thoſe things which are done of " them in ſecret. But all things that are " reproved, are made manifeſt by the " light." And 1 Theſ. iv. 5. " Not in the " luſt of concupiſcence, even as the Gentiles " who know not God, &c."

What has been ſaid, may, perhaps, receive illuſtration, by exhibiting a caſe in point.—Eugenio, though but poorly educated, wanted not ambition. When he came to be of age to puſh his fortune, he projected various ſchemes to raiſe himſelf; all which, by various accidents, proved abortive. He then ſought relief to his mind in diſſipation; he became a conſtant tavern-haunter with low and looſe company, whoſe coarſe manners, obſcene converſation, and diſſolute mirth, became familiar and agreeable to him, as being found, in ſome ſort, neceſſary to divert the chagrin that preyed upon him in his ſolitary hours. When he had ſpent a few years in this courſe of life, he unexpectedly, by the death of ſome relations,

became heir to the eſtate and honours of a nobleman. He advanced his claim, and got it ſuſtained. And now the ſenſe of honour, that had been almoſt quite extinguiſhed, began to kindle afreſh in his breaſt. He lamented the meanneſs of his education, and, in order to ſupply the defect made it his buſineſs to get acquainted with gentlemen diſtinguiſhed for good ſenſe and politeneſs, capable to promote chearfulneſs and good humour with decency. To ſuch he ſtudied to render his houſe and table acceptable and inviting on all occaſions. The longer he enjoyed his new company, the more his reliſh for it encreaſed, the more his ſenſe of honour was refined, and his diſguſt at his former company and way of life ſo confirmed, that he now ſeriouſly wonders, how any man can be ſo loſt to reflection as to ſuffer himſelf to be entangled in ſuch a courſe. He even wonders what could enchain him to it ſo long, and is apt to conſider all that period as a ſeaſon of infatuation or madneſs, or as if he had ſo long laboured under the delirium of a fever. Though his unexpected change of condition firſt opened his eyes, and roused the ſenſe of honour in his heart, yet he now clearly ſees, that courſe

of

of life to be, not only unbecoming a man of rank, adorned with titles of honour, but diſgraceful to the loweſt of the human ſpecies, or, in two words, not only ignoble, but alſo unmanly.

It may be proper now to obſerve, that the Goſpel, which condemns all uncleanneſs, not only propoſes marriage as an honourable guard againſt it, but alſo conſults the comfort of the married ſtate, by enforcing upon Chriſtians, in that ſtate, the ſentiment of love and honour, by which, as obſerved before, the common propenſity in the human ſpecies is peculiarly dignified. So ſays Paul, Col. iii. 19. "Huſbands, love your "wives, and be not bitter againſt them:" and Peter, 1. Ep. iii. 7, after exhorting the wives, adds, "Likewiſe, ye huſbands, "dwell with them according to knowledge, "giving honour unto the wife, as unto the "weaker veſſel, and as being heirs together "of the grace of life, that your prayers be "not hindred."

As I formerly obſerved how the ſcripture enforces conjugal love, it remains, that ſome notice be now taken of the honour that muſt attend it; for love cannot long ſubſiſt, unleſs honour go hand-in-hand along with it.

When

When we obſerve the gentle and reſpectful manners, which nature, without reaſoning, effectually inſtills into young people entering into the conjugal relation, when drawn to it by entire love; either as we find the caſe deſcribed to us in books, or as it ſometimes appears in common life; a ſtrong preſumption ariſes, that now a ſolid foundation is laid for laſting happineſs. Accordingly, this promiſing period of human life, ſo big with flattering hopes, and ſo fit to ſoothe the common foible of fallen mankind, who ſtill dream of ſome earthly paradiſe, readily engages the attention of all companies, as it conſtantly employs the pen of many writers. But experience ſoon ſteps in, and damps our expectation, by repreſenting to us, as modern ſtyle ſometimes will have it, that there is a kind of fatality that preſides over and frowns upon the life of man, ſtill forbidding his happineſs to be complete; often entirely defeating his moſt prudent and well-weighed ſchemes, and conſtantly making enjoyment fall ſhort of expectation. Or, even when no remarkable croſs accident intervenes, that there is ſomething in man's nature, that forbids him to be quite happy, and ſeems induſtrious to create cauſe of diſ-

quiet

quiet to him, when every thing around him ſeems to invite him to happineſs.

When we look into the ſcripture, we ſee the cauſe of this, for it plainly aſſures us, that this preſent life is forfeited by ſin, and ſubjected to the curſe and frown of the Deity; and that accordingly every alleviation or ſuſpenſion of its miſeries, ought to be thankfully acknowledged, as an evidence of the divine long-ſuffering and bounty.

But, though the frown of providence, forbidding complete happineſs in this life, is too univerſally manifeſt to be called in queſtion, yet it is obſervable, that what may be called the two firſt ſcenes of human life, open with ſuch fair beginnings, and ſuch blooming proſpects, as to give ſome hint how happy this earthly life would have been, had it not been forfeited; even as the unavoidable adverſities of life, by deriving, commonly, a great ſhare of the miſery that attends them, from the high expectations which we ſo fondly entertain, become a proof of the forfeiture, too plain to be denied.

By the two ſcenes above alluded to, I mean, in the firſt place, the charming proſpect of innocence, joined with unaffected

gaiety

gaiety of heart, which ſtrikes us when we behold the ſmiles and play of a healthy thriving child! And the next ſcene is what we have mentioned, that of a loving pair, obtaining their deſired union by marriage. From theſe two, all the fondeſt pictures of human happineſs are drawn; and by theſe the proſpect is bounded. Even the imagination of the poet can ſoar no higher, than to ſome combination or refinement of theſe. Thus, man reſembles the flowers which open in the ſpring. He blooms for a while, diſplays his higheſt excellency, and ſwells his hopes;—then gradually fades, till he fall into the grouud, from whence he ſprang. And thus we find the ſcripture makes a true eſtimate, when it ſays, 1 Pet. i. 24, 25, "All fleſh is as graſs, and all the glory of man "as the flower of the graſs."—"The graſs "withereth, and the flower thereof falleth "away; but the word of the Lord endureth "for ever: and this is the word, which by "the goſpel is preached unto you."

Now, though the goſpel never inflames our love of this life, by drawing alluring pictures of its enjoyments, nor flatters our pride with deluſive hopes, which only ſerve to imbitter diſappointment, yet it throws a bene-

benevolent eye on the concerns of this mortal life, and breathes ſuch a ſpirit of humanity and patience, as tends, not only to alleviate the unavoidable calamities of it, but to prevent or heal thoſe miſeries, which we create to ourſelves by the diſorder of our own paſſions.

With a view to this, in the caſe before us, the goſpel finds it needful, as we have ſeen by the text already cited, to remind the huſband of the reaſon ſuggeſted by nature why he ſhould maintain his affection to his wife, in the way of giving honour to her. The Greek phraſe here has a propriety and force, not ſo obvious in our verſion. It runs literally thus: "As unto the weaker veſſel, the "*female*, or *womanly* giving honour,"—taking *womanly*, in the like honourable ſenſe as we uſe the word *manly*, when we ſpeak of what is peculiarly becoming a man: ſo plainly intimating, that in every reſpect wherein the woman is formed weaker than the man, ſhe is furniſhed with ſo many female recommendations, rendering her the more worthy of her huſband's love and eſteem; or, that every branch of her natural weakneſs, is adorned with ſuch female advantages, as could not

well ſubſiſt, but in connection with that weakneſs.

There is, therefore, in the married ſtate, an honour due by the man to the woman, as there is an honour due by the woman to the man; and the duty incumbent upon the chriſtian huſband, in oppoſition to neglecting, deſpiſing, or, (as it is moſt properly termed) "*being bitter againſt his wife*," is to "dwell with her according to knowledge," by loving her, giving honour, and ſhewing manly tenderneſs to her, as *the weaker veſſel, the womanly*; while the counter-duty of the wife is equally enforced to ſubmit, obey, and give honour to him, as *the man, the head*. The ſubmiſſion commanded on the part of the woman, is *tempered* by the love commanded on the part of the man; and in the ſedulous and continued cultivation and tempering of the mutual honour, thus due to each other, lies the happineſs of the married pair; living together as heirs of the grace of life.

Now, in connection with the conjugal love and ſentiment of honour, enforced by the chriſtian law, in manner before mentioned, the apoſtle, in the paſſage already cited, 1 Cor. chap. vii. adds, ver. 3 and 5, "Let

"the

" the huſband render unto the wife due be-
" nevolence, and likewiſe alſo the wife un-
" to the huſband. The wife hath not power
" of her own body, but the huſband; and,
" in like manner alſo, the huſband hath not
" power of his own body, but the wife.
" Defraud ye not one the other, except it
" be with conſent for a time, that ye may
" give yourſelves to faſting and prayer; and
" come together again, that Satan tempt
" you not for your incontinency."

Here is a plain law, enforcing upon the conſcience of both the chriſtian man and woman, the reciprocal duty of marriage: and as the gratification of the natural propenſity of the ſexes, is, for the wiſeſt purpoſes, confined by the great lawgiver within this line, ſo here is a ſtrong charge to the married pair, againſt defrauding one another, or neglecting to attend to the mutual claims of that propenſity on either ſide. It is called " defrauding" one another, on account of the power, or right, which the ſacred contract of marriage gives to each over the other; and it is to guard againſt this fraud, and the impurities to which it may lead, that the apoſtle, though it may be lawful on certain occaſions for married perſons to

abſtain from the conjugal enjoyment for a ſeaſon, charges them to come together again, leſt Satan, through the force of their paſſions, get an advantage againſt them.

It is evident from this paſſage, that the huſband and the wife have the ſole claim, each upon the other; and that in the decent and proper maintenance of theſe claims, the gratification of the natural propenſity is both lawful and honourable, and free from all manner of defilement, both before God and man.

To illuſtrate what has been ſaid, it may be proper to conſider the whole paſſage already glanced at, in 1 Pet. iii. 1—7, which runs thus: "Likewiſe, ye wives, be in ſub-
" jection to your own huſbands, that if any
" obey not the word, they alſo may, without
" the word, be won by the converſation of
" the wives, beholding your chaſte conver-
" ſation coupled with fear. Whoſe adorn-
" ing, let it not be that outward, of plait-
" ing the hair, and wearing of gold, or of
" putting on of apparel; but the hidden
" man of the heart, in the incorrup-
" tible, of a meek and quiet ſpirit, which
" is, in the ſight of God, of great price.
" For after this manner in old time, the

" holy

" holy women alſo, who truſted in God,
" adorned themſelves, being in ſubjection
" to their own huſbands: even as Sarah
" obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord, whoſe
" daughters ye are as long as ye do well,
" and are not afraid with any amazement.
" In like manner, ye huſbands, dwell with
" them according to knowledge, giving ho-
" nour unto the wife as unto the weaker
" veſſel, and as being heirs together of the
" grace of life, that your prayers be not
" hindered."

How beautifully, how agreeably to the dictates of nature, and with what powerful motives are the peculiar duties incumbent on the married pair towards each other, commended to them in this paſſage!

The apoſtle begins with the wife, and ſtrongly enforces her duty, by the hopes of its proving ſalvation to her huſband, if he be an unbeliever; by the peculiar approbation of the Deity; and by the amiable example of Sarah.

By what he ſays, it appears, that the wife is not to hold her claim upon her huſband, with any imperious air, or to urge it with any immodeſt deportment; for either of theſe, in any degree, would be unſuitable

to her proper feminine character, and ſo unnatural; but ſhe is to ſupport her claim by the proper ornaments which adorn her as a woman, the weaker veſſel; and which are connected with that weakneſs. In other words, ſhe is to ſtudy to ſecure the affection of her huſband, by every female or womanly endearment.

And in the firſt place, ſhe is to be in ſubjection to her own huſband, as Sarah was; not the ſubjection of a ſlave, but in that willing ſubjection which we yield to our beſt friend and protector, when we judge our greateſt ſecurity and higheſt honour to lie in our ſubmiſſion. It is agreeable to this idea, that all the apoſtolic exhortations run, for wives to ſubmit themſelves unto their own huſbands, as unto the Lord—to be obedient unto them—and to reverence them; and it is in this view, that their obedience, ſubmiſſion, and reverence are called for, with peculiar propriety, as an imitation of the obedience, ſubjection and fear, which the *church*, the *ſpouſe*, the *Lamb's wife*, yields to her great *head* and *huſband*.

The apoſtle, in the next place, points out the particular ornaments, by which the wife is both to pleaſe the Lord, and to captivate

tivate and retain her huſband's affection. And theſe are not to conſiſt of the tinſel ornaments of dreſs. The harlot, bold and immodeſt in her deportment, is alſo gorgeous in her attire; ſuch ornaments, therefore, inſtead of making the wife reſemble the chaſte ſpouſe of Chriſt, would give her more the reſemblance of, or be too much like, thoſe worn by that woman, who is the oppoſite of the Lamb's wife (Rev. xvii. 4). But in oppoſition to this, the ornaments of the chriſtian wife are to be, not the wearing of gold, or other outward ornaments of dreſs, but the ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit, which, ſays the apoſtle, is, in the ſight of God, of great price.

However ſtrongly theſe words inculcate, as they certainly do upon chriſtian women, the duty of modeſty and ſobriety in their dreſs; and however much it ought therefore to be their ſtudy, as it muſt ever be the ſtudy of all chriſtians, to make conſcience of ſobriety in that matter; yet the apoſtle does not appear, as ſome would underſtand by this paſſage, to prohibit in all caſes the wearing of gold and rich apparel, when ſuitable to the ſtation of the perſons who wear it; nor does he intimate that a maid could forget her ornaments,

ments, or a bride her attire; but his great aim plainly is, that the wife ſhould ſtudy to attract her huſband's deſires, and ſecure his affections, by ornaments of a far ſuperior nature; the crown of which ſhould be that meek and quiet ſpirit, ſo well ſuited to ſet off, to the beſt advantage, thoſe female charms, which are ſo agreeable to the natural weakneſs wherein ſhe is formed inferior to the man; and which, at the ſame time, ſerve to render her moſt amiable and deſirable to her huſband; and never fail to lead him, if he be manly, as ſhe is womanly, to the moſt tender regard for her, and to glory in protecting her as his crown.

This is the moſt endearing, and moſt honourable way, in which the wife can prefer and retain her claims upon her huſband; and this way, ſo forcibly urged by revelation, is quite agreeable to nature; for hereby ſhe charms him, ſhe attracts his deſires, and, with the pureſt chaſtity, yields herſelf, as due, on the moſt honourable terms, to his ſolicitations.

Agreeably to this paſſage, is that 1 Tim. ii. 9. " In like manner alſo that women " adorn themſelves in modeſt apparel, with " ſhamefacedneſs and ſobriety; not with

" broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or coſtly
" array; but (which becometh women pro-
" feſſing godlineſs) with good works. Let
" the women learn in ſilence, with all ſub-
" jection; but I ſuffer not a woman to teach,
" or to uſurp authority over the man, but to
" be in ſilence. For Adam was firſt form-
" ed, then Eve. And Adam was not de-
" ceived; but the woman, being deceived,
" was in the tranſgreſſion. But ſhe ſhall be
" ſaved in (or through) child-bearing, if
" they continue in faith, and charity, and
" holineſs with ſobriety."

The apoſtle is here inculcating the ſame meekneſs and quietneſs of ſpirit on the woman, as in the paſſage laſt cited; encouraging her to ſtudy ſuch a deportment as is becoming her proper ſphere of life, by the hope of that eternal ſalvation, which comes to men, through Emanuel having condeſcended to become a little child, and to be born of a woman.

To the ſame purpoſe we may conſider what the apoſtle ſays, in the vth chap. of the ſame Epiſtle, ver. 14. " I will there-
" fore that the younger women marry, bear
" children, guide the houſe, give none oc-
" caſion to the adverſary to ſpeak reproach-

" fully."

" fully." And in his Epiſtle to Titus, chap. ii. ver. 4 and 5, where he exhorts the elder women in this manner: " That they " may teach the younger women to be " ſober, to love their huſbands, to love their " children, to be ſober, chaſte, keepers at " home, good, obedient to their own huſ- " bands, that the word of God be not blaſ- " phemed."

All theſe paſſages point out very plainly the way in which women, profeſſing godlineſs, are to adorn the profeſſion which they make, as well as the way in which they will moſt naturally attract both the deſires and the eſteem of their huſbands.

The ſphere they are to move in, is, indeed, humble: they are forbidden to be aſſuming in any matter; they are to keep at the greateſt diſtance from a forward behaviour, both at home and in the church; they are not ſuffered to teach, nor to uſurp authority over the man, but are commanded to learn in ſilence, with all ſubjection. There is undoubtedly ſomething humiliating in all this, eſpecially when we include the matter of child-bearing, with all its diſtreſſing antecedents and concomitants, and when we conſider that the whole courſe is, in ſome

ſort,

ſort, a puniſhment for the firſt tranſgreſſion, as appears plainly by the apoſtle's pointing to the particular part which the woman had in that tranſgreſſion, and by comparing this paſſage with Gen. iii. 16. where the ſentence againſt the woman runs thus: "Unto the "woman *God* ſaid, I will greatly multiply "thy ſorrow and thy conception; in ſorrow "ſhalt thou bring forth children: and thy "deſire ſhall be to thy huſband, and he ſhall "rule over thee."—Yet the apoſtle, for the comfort and encouragement of the woman, in ſubmitting with patience and meekneſs to the allotment of divine providence in this matter, with every humbling circumſtance which attends it, adorning her proper ſphere of life with ſhamefacedneſs and ſobriety; with a chaſte and blameleſs converſation; in a word, with all thoſe domeſtic and female virtues, which at once become her as a chriſtian, and give her character a peculiar luſtre in the eye of her huſband—the apoſtle ſays, for her comfort and encouragement in all this, "She ſhall be ſaved in (or "through) child-bearing;" even as in the forecited 1 Pet. iii. 4, the apoſtle ſays, "this "meek and quiet ſpirit is in the ſight of God "of great price."

Thus the apoſtle exhorts the wife, recommending, as her chief ornament, a meek and quiet ſpirit, as of great eſtimation with her maker, however light ſhe herſelf may be diſpoſed to make of it. And by the example of Sarah, and all the holy women in old time, he recommends that ſubjection, which, together with the other amiable virtues, is moſt becoming the ſphere of life alloted to her by divine providence; and at the ſame time, beſt ſuited to ſet off to the greateſt advantage all thoſe female accompliſhments, with which ſhe is endued by nature, and which conſtitute both her higheſt honour, and ſtrongeſt ſecurity for her huſband's affections.

Upon the whole, we cannot but remark, as before, the gracious compaſſion of the Deity, in the tender and benevolent eye with which he regards all, but eſpecially the more important concerns of human life, manifeſted by inſeparably connecting the duty and intereſt of men together—alleviating the inevitable calamities of life, by exalting a patient ſubmiſſion to that which, in a ſort is inflicted as a puniſhment, into a chriſtian virtue. And in healing or preventing ſuch trouble, as we are ready to cre-

ate

ate to ourſelves through the diſorder of our own paſſions, by affording and inculcating ſuch a line of duty, eſpecially in the conjugal relation, as has the moſt natural tendency to effect that kindly purpoſe.

It is now time to look back to the text, 1 Peter iii. 7. and take notice of the apoſtle's exhortation to the huſband. And we ſhall find, as it has been already hinted, that, agreeably to the ſuggeſtions of nature, the part which he has to act in this matter, is ſuch as is perfectly agreeable to the dictates of nature, ſuch as is manly, or, peculiarly becoming a man, the ſuperior part of the creation.

How agreeable is it to the impreſſion which was evidently made on the mind of Adam, when firſt he beheld the lovely form of his accompliſhed bride, conducted into his preſence by the hand of God himſelf! Adam, with admiration beholds her, as he thinks, ſeeing through the eye of love, an improvement on his own likeneſs; ſhe appears to him above every thing elſe in the creation of God, a help-meet for him, and immediately the pureſt love and chaſteſt deſires kindle in his boſom,

leading

leading him to utter himſelf, in a manner expreſſive at once of the ardency and ſingleneſs of that affection, which God ordained ſhould ſubſiſt between a man and his wife; Gen. ii. 23. "This is bone of my bone, (ſays "he) and fleſh of my fleſh; ſhe ſhall be "called woman, becauſe ſhe was taken out "of man." And in order to eſtabliſh the connections between him and her, not only as ſuperior to all other relations, but alſo ſo intire as that no other relation ſhould ſhare in the peculiar love which conſtitutes that connection, it is immediately added by the Creator himſelf, (vide Mat. xix. 5,) "Therefore ſhall a man leave his father and mother, and ſhall cleave to his wife, and they "twain ſhall be one fleſh." With what force then does the Lord Jeſus, in his doctrine, conclude from that paſſage, "What "God hath joined together, let no man put "aſunder!"

Milton has deſcribed the noble ſentiments before mentioned, in a moſt natural and elegant manner in the following lines; where, after indulging the poet's licence, in making Adam awake from his dream, wherein he ſaw the great Creator take the woman from his ſide, and mould her with his hands;

and after repreſenting him in his waking thoughts as anxiouſly purſuing the lovely object which he had beheld in his imagination—The poet, on her approach, puts theſe words into his mouth :

——————————adorn'd
With what all earth or heav'n could beſtow,
To make her amiable; on ſhe came
Led by her heav'nly Maker, though unſeen,
And guided by his voice, nor uninform'd
Of nuptial ſanctity, and marriage rites.
Grace was in all her ſteps, heav'n in her eye,
In every geſture, dignity and love!
I, overjoy'd, could not forbear, aloud,
——————————Thou haſt fulfil'd
Thy words, Creator, bounteous and benign!
Giver of all things fair! but faireſt this
Of all thy gifts! nor envieſt. I now ſee
Bone of my bone, fleſh of my fleſh, myſelf
Before me: Woman is her name; of man
Extracted; for this cauſe he ſhall forego
Father and mother, and to his wife adhere;
And they ſhall be one fleſh, one heart, one ſoul.
B. viii. l. 484.

Such, then, were the ſentiments of love and honour, which the gracious Creator at firſt implanted in the human breaſt, and which, notwithſtanding the great corruption of human nature, have ſtill a ſtrong foundation there. And thus the relation of marriage

riage is honoured above all other earthly relations: and theſe noble ſentiments are ordained to be the companions of the mutual propenſity between the ſexes, with which mankind is endued in common with the reſt of the animal creation. Man therefore degrades himſelf to a level with the beaſts, when he indulges this common propenſity, unaccompanied with theſe exalted ſentiments of tender affection and honour; or, in other words, when he indulges it out of that line within which the great Creator, for the ſake of maintaining that love and honour unviolated, has circumſcribed it; for it is the honourable ſtate of marriage alone wherein that noble ſentiment can be maintained, promoted, and cultivated, in connection with the gratification of that propenſity, and wherein that propenſity can be rendered ſubſervient to thoſe great and important purpoſes; and of conſequence, it is that honourable ſtate alone, as before obſerved, wherein this gratification can be lawful, and ſo free from defilement and impurity of every kind.

Now the apoſtle having theſe exalted purpoſes in view, exhorts the huſband in this manner, 1 Pet. iii. 7. "Likewiſe, ye huſ-

"bands,

" bands, dwell with them according to " knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, " as unto the weaker veſſel :" and in the paſſage before cited, Eph. v. 25 and 28. " Huſbands, love your wives, even as Chriſt " alſo loved the church, and gave himſelf " for it"—" So ought men to love their " wives as their own bodies ; he who loveth " his wife, loveth himſelf, for no man ever " yet hated his own fleſh, but nouriſheth " and cheriſheth it, even as the Lord the " the church."

When the apoſtle exhorts the huſbands to dwell with the wives " according to know- " ledge," it brings to remembrance what is ſaid in the paſſage cited, 1 Cor. vii. 3. " Let the huſband render unto the wife due " benevolence ;" and when he adds, " giv- " ing honour unto her as unto the weaker " veſſel," he points out that proper, natural, manly part, which belongs to the huſband, in manner before expreſſed, and which conſiſts in obſerving the utmoſt delicacy, both in advancing his own claims, and alſo in ſupporting thoſe of his wife. For the word *honour* is uſed in other paſſages to denote ſupport and maintenance, and may be conſidered of the like import here, without ex-

cluding any other ſenſe wherein it may ſuggeſt the idea of manly, tender, and delicate deportment.

In this ſenſe, the Lord explains the law, where it is ſaid, "*honour* thy father and mo-" ther," when he reproves the Phariſees for making void the commandment by their traditions, which allowed them to devote their ſubſtance to ſome pious uſe, and then withhold it from their aged parents, who had a natural and divine claim to be requited with an honourable maintenance. See Matt. xv. 1—9, and compare it with 1 Tim. v. 3, 4.

In the ſame manner ſays Paul to Timothy, 1 Ep. v. 17, "Let the elders, who rule " well, be counted worthy of double *ho-*" *nour*," or ſupport, fixing this meaning very clearly to the word honour, by quoting from the law theſe words, "Thou ſhalt not " muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn," " and the labourer is worthy of his reward." See alſo how the apoſtle explains this, 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10.

Now, in a ſimilar ſenſe, the wife, though in a ſtrict connection with thoſe female charms which render her amiable in the eyes of her huſband, being the weaker veſſel, and her female honour, on account of this

this weakneſs, being, by God and nature, as well as herſelf, yielded into the poſſeſſion of the huſband, to be ſecured and protected by him; every thing conſpires to render it his duty, his intereſt, and his honour, to ſupport and maintain thoſe claims, which his wife has upon him with the utmoſt delicacy and affection.

I am inclined to illuſtrate this ſentiment by that paſſage in the Proverbs, where it is ſaid, Prov. xii. 4. "A virtuous woman is a "crown to her huſband:" and I think I am kept in countenance in doing ſo, by what the apoſtle ſays, 1 Cor. xi. 7. "The woman "is the glory of the man." For as the virtue of a woman conſiſts in the ſimplicity of her affection, ſurrendering her honour into the poſſeſſion of her huſband, and conſidering it as locked up there in a ſacred repoſitory, binding her to ſingleneſs of affection towards him, to be wholly for him, and not for another, ſo it is his glory, not only to protect and guard that honour, but alſo to cheriſh and cultivate the virtue of the wife, by ſupporting and maintaining all her honourable claims, advancing his own in that gentle, decent, and delicate manner, which indicates his confidence in her, which is in-

ſpired by love and honour, and is beſt ſuited to win, upon her part, the moſt decent compliance, wherein ſhe ſurrenders herſelf to her huſband without ſullying, yea at the rate of preſerving her female honour to the beſt advantage.

It is ſaid, concerning the virtuous woman, Prov. chap. xxxi. where her character is much celebrated, that "The heart of her "huſband doth ſafely truſt in her," and, "her huſband is known in the gates;" i. e. he is known with honour on her account. "Her children riſe up and call her bleſſed, "her huſband and he praiſeth her." And the whole book of Solomon's Song is deſcriptive of the tendereſt love, accompanied with the moſt delicate honour ſubſiſting in the conjugal relation.

This book, or ſong, together with what is ſaid concerning the virtuous woman in the Proverbs, have, indeed, a meaning infinitely more ſublime than what reſpects any fleeting relation of this life, being written to deſcribe the union between Chriſt and his church; but then it muſt be obſerved, that if the figures are not, in ſome degree, literally applicable to the conjugal relation, they will fail of being ſignificant as to the

grand matter they are meant to deſcribe: and accordingly the apoſtle improves them in this view in his exhortation to huſbands and wives, in the paſſage, which has been repeatedly cited Eph. v. 22. to the end.

With reſpect to the concluding words of the text, "as being heirs together of the "grace of life, that your prayers be not "hindered," there is no call to enlarge, as the text was quoted, principally, with a view to treat of the peculiar honour of marriage. I ſhall, therefore, only juſt obſerve, that theſe words contain a ſuperadded motive to the friends of revelation, ſimilar to the argument which the apoſtle enforces on the Corinthians againſt fornication, and every abuſe of the natural propenſity, drawn from their exalted dignity as belonging to Chriſt. Chriſtians, in the conjugal relation, are bound to avoid all uncleanneſs, and alſo to be helpers of each others faith, hope, and charity. And in order to this, they are bound to attend to the decent and honourable maintenance of their mutual claims before mentioned. Thus they appear in a peculiar manner ſubject to God, in this, as in every thing, purifying their ways, by taking heed to the ſame according to his word, and living

ing together as heirs of his grace. And thus living in ſpiritual, as in conjugal love, their prayers "are not hindered," but uninterrupted by jarring and diſcord, aſcend up in uniſon to his throne for the gift of that grace, even eternal life through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

It may be ſaid, upon the whole, that as theſe ſentiments of love and honour appear in the greateſt perfection, when blended with an amiable diſpoſition, ſo, when we behold an amiable couple united by marriage, their manners ſuggeſted by love, independant of any reaſoning, exhibit a fine illuſtration of our ſubject.

For in the deportment of the woman, we ſhall find the moſt intire love to the huſband expreſſed in the moſt endearing, and, at the ſame time, in the moſt modeſt, diſcreet, chaſte, and gentle manner.

And on the part of the man, that his wife is the deſire of his eyes—and that his heart truſts in her. In other words, that he confiders her *as his crown*, as will be manifeſt by the moſt tender, courteous, indulgent, and, in one word, by the moſt *manly* deportment towards her, by a deportment anſwering always in ſome degree to that of the bridegroom rejoicing over the bride, and

thoſe

thoſe other elevated deſcriptions given in the prophets with reſpect to this ſubject.

To conclude, "Marriage (according to "the words of the apoſtle) is honourable in "all, and the bed undefiled, but whore-"mongers and adulterers God will judge." And it is in the marriage ſtate alone, that the propenſity of the ſexes being mingled with the noble ſentiments of love and honour, mutually kindling, ruling, and confirming each other, is, or can be indulged, free from impurity of every kind.

In the honourable married ſtate, the chaſteſt deſires are gratified; in it the pureſt joys are indulged; and to crown the whole, thoſe conjugal enjoyments leave no ſting behind; no ſuch guilty and corroding thoughts as prey upon the unhappy proſtitute; no ſuch debaſing reflections as haunt the unclean fornicator, or the equally unclean ſelf-pollutor; and above all, no ſuch cutting reflections as ſting the ſoul of him, who has diſhonoured a virgin, i. e. the cruel whoremonger, or the yet more vile adulterer.

FINIS.

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